

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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/071 W

-----021578 051454Z /43

O 051425Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5282

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SANA 3324

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, YE

SUBJECT: YEMENI TRIBAL LEADER ASKS THAT USG INTERVENE WITH SAUDIS
AGAINST OPPONENT

SUMMARY: ABDALLAH BIN HUSAYN AHMAR PROPOSES THAT USG SEEK
TO FORESTALL ACCESSION TO POWER BY AL ABDALLAH SALIH. END
SUMMARY.

1. ON MORNING JULY 5, MOHAMMED AS-SHARAFI, EMISSARY FROM
ABDALLAH BIN HUSAYN AL AHMAR, PARAMOUNT SHAHYK OF HASHID
TRIBES, BROUGHT MESSAGE TO CHARGE AND ECONOMIC OFFICER. AS-
SHARAFI NOTED THAT A NATURAL COALITION OF TRIBES "INTELLECTUALS"
AND ELEMENTS OF THE MILITARY WAS EMERGING IN YAR IN WHAT HE
DESCRIBED AS "NATIONAL FRONT." THIS COALITION WOULD SOON
SORT OUT ARRANGEMENTS IT WANTED FOR SHARING OF POWER IN NEW
GOVERNMENT AND WHILE DOING SO WAS ALSO IN CONTACT WITH
SAUDIS. PROBLEM IS THAT ALI ABDALLAH SALIH AND ELEMENTS OF THE
MILITARY LOYAL TO HIM MAY WELL ATTEMPT TO SEIZE POWER FOR
THEMSELVES. WHAT WOULD MAKE THIS ATTEMPT SO SERIOUS, AS-SHARAFI
SAID, IS THAT SAUDIS ARE ALSO SUPPORTING SALIH AN MAY
ASSIST HIM AS-SHARAFI SAID ALL MEMBERS OF THE "NATIONAL FRONT"
CONSIDER SALIH TO BE UNQUALIFIED TO LEAD YEMEN ON PYSCHOLO-
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GICAL, "CULTURAL" AND POLITICAL GROUNDS AND WILL RESIST THIS
ATTEMPT IF IT COMES AT ALL COSTS.

2. WHAT AL-AHMAR WISHES USG TO DO IS TO APPROACH SAUDIS
AND INFORM THEM, WITHOUT REVEALING THAT USG HAS ANY PRIOR
ARRANGEMENT WITH "NATIONAL FRONT" GROUPS ON THIS MATTER,
THAT ALI ABDALLAH SALIH IS WRONG MAN TO BACK IN YEMEN AND

THAT SAUDIS SHOULD REMOVE THEIR SUPPORT FROM HIM. AS-SHARAFI
FURTHER STATED THAT HE HAD A LIST WHICH HE WAS PREPARED TO
SHARE WITH
EMBASSY OF THOSE MILITARY OFFICERS WHO WERE
CONSIDERED IMPORTANT TO THE "NATIONAL FRONT" GROUP. USG
SHOULD SEEK TO ENSURE THAT SAUDIS DO NOT PERMIT THESE OFFICERS
TO BE PURGED BY SALIH.

3. CHARGE TOLD AS-SHARAFI THAT HE WOULD PASS AL-AHMAR'S
MESSAGE TO WASHINGTON BUT HE COULD NOT GUARANTEE RESPONSE AND
THAT PROBLEMS OF SORTING OUT LEADERSHIP IN YEMEN WERE ONES
WHICH USG THOUGHT SHOULD BE LEFT TO YEMENIS THEMSELVES.

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THERE ARE GOOD AND SUFFICIENT
REASONS FOR SEEKING TO RESTRAIN SAUDIS FROM BACKING ALI
ABDALLAH SALIH IN A GRAB FOR POWER, IF THAT IS IN FACT HIS
INTENTION. WE THINK IT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE PASSING ON TO
SAUDIS OUR ASSESSMENT OF SALIH AS SET FORTH IN SANA DAO
MESSAGE 28 1400Z JUN 78 AND SANA 3298. WE LEAVE THIS
DECISION TO DEPARTMENT AND JIDDA BUT RECOMMEND THAT
IF SANA'S VIEW OF SALIH IS PASSED TO SAUDIS IT BE DONE SO
WITH NOTE THAT THIS IS USG ASSESSMENT AND NOT MERELY THAT
OF ELEMENTS OF YEMENI POLITICAL SCENE.
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